



U.S. Department of Justice

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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## **MS-13 Member Sentenced to Two Years in Prison For Felony Threats Meant to Silence Witness - Defendant Is Among Eleven People Indicted For Gang-Related Crimes -**

WASHINGTON - Henry Saravia, 21, a member of the MS-13 gang, has been sentenced to two years of incarceration for threatening to injure a victim in connection with a gang-related home invasion in Northwest Washington in 2009.

Saravia, also known as Henry Sarba, and "Flaco," pled guilty in February 2011 to a charge of threatening to injure or kidnap a person. He was sentenced by the Honorable Rosemary M. Collyer on May 4, 2011 in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. Upon completion of his prison term, Saravia is to be placed on three years of supervised release.

The sentence was announced by U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr., John P. Torres, Special Agent in Charge of the Washington Office of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) and Cathy L. Lanier, Chief of the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD).

According to the government's evidence, Saravia's crimes took place in the aftermath of an armed home invasion on December 11, 2009 in Northwest Washington.

Five other members or associates of MS-13 planned and committed the invasion of the home on Taylor Street NW. At that time, the house's basement was being used as a bordello, which was operated by the victim in this case. The MS-13 members intended to rob the individuals affiliated with the bordello, including the victim, and to force them to begin paying extortion money to MS-13, a practice commonly referred to within MS-13 as "collecting rent."

After arriving at the bordello, four of the MS-13 members entered the house, armed with a loaded gun and a knife, and robbed and restrained five individuals inside. Two gang members assaulted and attempted to sexually abuse one of these individuals. The victim, a 35-year-old man, arrived at the entrance to the bordello while the crimes were in progress, but did not enter the bordello. The victim fled from the house when someone chased him.

The police eventually arrived and arrested three of the five MS-13 perpetrators that night. The two other perpetrators fled the scene that night, but were eventually identified after an extensive investigation, and arrested in April 2010.

Saravia, who was not present at the home invasion, eventually learned that MS-13 members had been arrested and detained because of their participation. Saravia knew the victim and that he operated the bordello. On or about December 18, 2009, Saravia began calling people affiliated with the bordello, including the victim. Saravia told the victim and another bordello associate not to go to court to testify against the MS-13 members who had been arrested for the home invasion, and told the victim not to report anything to the police.

Saravia also told the victim that someone had offered to pay him to hurt the victim, but Saravia did not need money to hurt him, because he “loves” and “lives” for MS-13. He threatened to “beat the [expletive] out of” the victim if he did not pay rent to MS-13. All told, Saravia called the victim or the victim’s girlfriend at least three times between December 18, 2009, and April 2010 to threaten the victim and coerce him to pay rent to MS-13. Despite his intimidating conduct, Saravia did not injure the victim or the others he threatened.

After a months-long investigation, Saravia was identified as the individual who had threatened the victim. Saravia, who had no fixed address, was arrested in April 2010, and had been detained without bond until his sentencing.

As part of the Department of Justice’s nationwide effort to thwart gang violence, Saravia was among 11 individuals charged in a 35-count indictment filed before the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia in February 2011. The indictment charges various remaining defendants with taking part in a racketeering conspiracy, as well as murder in aid of racketeering, kidnaping in aid of racketeering, assault with a deadly weapon in aid of racketeering, and other offenses.

The case involving the remaining defendants is currently pending before Judge Collyer. A trial date has not yet been set.

In announcing Saravia’s sentencing, U.S. Attorney Machen, Special Agent in Charge Torres and Chief Lanier commended the excellent work of the MPD and the Washington Office of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s Homeland Security Investigations. They also thanked U.S. Attorney’s Office Victim Advocate Melissa Milam, for providing assistance to the victim in Saravia’s case. They also expressed special appreciation to Trial Attorney Laura Gwinn of the Criminal Division’s Gang Unit, and to Assistant U.S. Attorneys William J. O’Malley, Jr., and Seth Adam Meinero, who investigated and prosecuted Saravia’s case, and are continuing to prosecute the case against the other indicted MS-13 members.